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# Fire Emblem Awakening ::Noble Remembrance::

by RoadToDusk

## Summary

Waking up on a field with no memory is already suspicious enough, to somehow become a tactician to an entire army is even stranger. There's been dreams haunting Soren ever since he awoken on that field. Dreams that he doesn't quite understand what they mean. Soren continues to strive through the days in order to keep all his comrades alive. Yet, in the back of his mind, he feels he's being watched. Watched by something he fears he wouldn't have any control over.

Will it change him into a better man, or will it change him into a monster?

## Notes

See the end of the work for notes

# Awakening

Do you remember?

*Remember what?*

When you first met her? You've mentioned her once before.

*Oh…that time.*

You promised to tell us the story Soren, we've all been waiting for this. You haven't told us much about how you got here, this supposed war you were involved in.

*All right, I suppose I'm obligated to tell you what I remember thus far. Though, it's not a kind tale as you may make it out to be. It's one of friendship and trials, of love and war, and how blood can try to run much thicker than water.*

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*The sweat that trailed down his neck was horrendous, the way his jaw tightened and his teeth clenched. His cloak clung desperately to his body. He had thrown himself forward, narrowly avoiding a bolt of lightning followed by an array of dark spells. It was a locked battle, he had prepared for this fight for ages. Though he did not know it would be this close. Lightning erupted as a fellow warrior joined by his side, rushing ahead and clashing with the dark mage that was violently attacking.*

*Chrom. The name rung through the air as the warrior connected making his advance, blocking and striking the openings that were made open to him.*

*"Hah!" Chrom parried the dark mages' magic only to retreat back hastily from the explosion he created. Chrom shielded his face, his raven locks lashing against his skin. The cloaked alley had quickly taken to the offense, casting his own brand of magic against the dark mage, providing cover to the noble. "There!" With the quick help, the cloaked caster averted his attention upwards to find the dark mage forming a seal around himself, preparing his next attack. It was with quick thinking that the cloaked mage was able to counter with a strong bolt of lightning.*

*The dark mage moved with such haste however, avoiding not only the cloaked attack but managing to land a brutal spell against Chrom. The rocks jagged upwards and the male could only hold his body up with the sturdy support of his sword. The dark mage attempted once more to finish the job yet the cloaked figure easily knocked away his spell, capturing the mage's full attention. It was more counters from there on, the battle raging intensely between the mages.*

*Counter after counter, strike after strike.*

*It seemed almost pointless as their strengths were equaled, yet this dark mage had incredibly powerful magic. It was only a matter of time when Chrom and him formed a tactful plan. Both had managed to get on opposite sides of this sorcerer, dividing his attention and causing him to lose sight on which is the real target. He took the bait as he decided to focus on Chrom. With a flick of his wrist, he casted the spell that would topple the dark mage. His body burst into flames, licking along his body as he felled. Chrom merely looked over to the cloaked figure with an optimistic grin.*

*"This isn't over yet—"*

*Watching the body rise from the purple flames, it twisted and morphed upwards, the cloaked mage only had seconds to press his palm towards' his friend's chest, shoving him out of the way. It worked as Chrom stumbled roughly back. Now he could only brace himself as the spell knocked him off his feet, hurling him onto his back. The agony that raged through his body, it felt so clear, it felt so /real/.*

*"H-Hey! Are you all right?" Chrom was by his side again, looking incredibly worried. Yet a smile etched on his face as he helped sit the cloaked figure up, 'That's the end of him. Thanks to you we carried the day you can rest easy—" the attention was averted to the remaining fires that lingered, watching them die. It didn't feel right, no, what was this feeling. A sharp, intense pain shot through his body, his vision distorting into red, cracked lines. No, this wasn't right.*

*What—what was this cracking—in his body?*

*"Hey…hey are you all right??" His vision worsened as he looked to his concerned friend, finding him shaking his body to get him out of his daze. Instead, he returned the gesture with a bolt of lightning, right through his abdomen. Time seemed to slow as Chrom's face consorted from shock into merciless agony.*

*"Don't....it's….this is not your fault—" The man, his dear friend, struggled to explain, "Promise me, you'll escape from this place…please…"*

*Go.*

*The last words was the last breathe he held. Chrom stumbled forward, the gaze in his eyes vanishing as he fell to his knees and lastly to the ground, remaining eerily still. The world became silent, the cloaked figure shaking in place at the actions he caused. No. No. He backed away, looking at his hands as they still twitched with the lightning spell he had cast.*

*"Gods, what have I done?!"*

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It was a blur where he ended up running. He just remembered fleeing, with no chance of ever running back. Something was haunting him, something was trying to grab him and relinquish him of all his self-control. His body consorted in violent twists, feeling his mind shatter and rip apart in a strange grip. He groaned faintly, wishing for his eyes to fly open, to take him away from this nightmarish reality.

He remembered—falling—he fell at some point when this nightmare began. What about before; what was he doing beforehand?

"Chrom, we have to do something," The voice grabbed his attention, focusing on the young female's innocent remark. "Oh, so what do you propose?" A male, no, it wasn't foreign to him, it sounded familiar in fact. It couldn't have been the same man from the dream. Wait, was it a dream? Yes….it had to be.

"Uh—I don't know!" She panicked.

Finally he forced his eyes to open, finding two hovering over his body in discussion. It was no doubt to his mind however that the male was definitely Chrom, but Gods, how does he know his name. They immediately looked, leaning forward causing the male to feel his personal space to be rather invaded at this point. Was this how strangers normally greeted each other in—in fact—wait —where *was* he?

"I see you're awake now," Chrom greeted.

“Hey there,” the young woman beside smiled warmly.

“There are better places to take a nap then on the ground, you know. Gimme your hand.” He gestured a open palm towards him. A complete stranger even. Rather gratefully, he took his hand and was lifted to his feet, standing nearly as tall as Chrom himself. The man smiled, taking a step back as the woman beside smiled and he had taken to notice a third stood with them, a tall man in full armor, attentively watching him specifically.

“You all right?” Chrom asked.

“Y-Yes,” He hesitated to respond, “Thank you Chrom,” The words accidently spit out of his mouth. Chrom in return raised a brow. “Ah, then you know who I am?” He pressed. That’s when his stomach dropped, what vivid images of the dream whisked away.

“No actually,” He responded dully. The others seem perplexed by the response as the stranger scratched his head. “I-It’s strange, your name…it just came to me…” He continued to scratch his head, “Yet nothing else will.”

“Hmm….how curious, not even your name by chance?” Chrom decided to ask. The male rested his chin on his palm, his brows furrowing tightly together in thought. No, he knows he has a name. What person could exist without one?

Yet what was his own name?

“No…I’m not sure….umm…” The male stumbled upon what to say next, “I’m sorry but where are we exactly right now?”

“You don’t even know where you are??” Chrom asked.

“Oh! I’ve heard of this before!” The young woman piped, “it’s called amnesia!”

“It’s called a load of Pegasus dung.” The armed man expressed, scoffing at his attempts to recall anything at this rate, “We’re to believe you remember milord’s name but not your own?”

The attention was drawn back to the robed man. He scratched his head uncomfortably, attempting to clear the fog from his mind. He knew there was something back there, he couldn’t reach it though, it was scratched and distorted. He sighed rather roughly, his shoulders slumping at his rather concerning predicament.

“It’s the truth! No matter how ridiculous it may sound.” He responded.

The armed man frowned at the response and already he had an unsettling feeling he was reaching his bad side. Especially since all three were armed.

“…what *if* it is true, Frederick? We can’t leave just leave him here, alone and confused?” Chrom turned to the other man, Frederick, “What sort of Shepherds would we be then?”

“Just the same milord,” Frederick responded, “I must emphasize caution. ‘Twould not let a wolf into our flock.” Chrom merely hummed as the cloaked stranger ran his hand through his red, shoulder length locks. He was getting rather unsettled by the predicament. It seemed like anyone at this point would have been better to deal with. He was being trialed as a criminal already by these common folk. Shepherds nonetheless.

“Right then—we’ll take him back to the town and sort this out.” Chrom agreed. Now it was his turn to jump back. Going to town, wait, how was this suddenly agreed upon?

“Wait a moment! Do I have a say in this?” He demanded.

“Peace friend—I promise we’ll hear all you have to say back in town. Now come,” Chrom gestured.

At first the man didn’t move, his shoulders slumped at he stared at the man in disbelief. It was only till Frederick came beside him, towering over him easily. He didn’t even want to meet the man’s glance as he simply turned and started walking after Chrom immediately. He rather not know how easy his body could be impaled with his lance. It was already easy to tell that Frederick was no ordinary man. He seemed to have been professional trained in the arts of fighting. Yet….why would he be hanging out with these two, tending to sheep?

They marched for an hour, nearly in total silence expect for the young women. She seemed to be the energetic one, constantly wearing a smile on her face. It soured though when she complained about all the walking they had done. Chrom only responded it was good training for them to which she stuck her tongue out at him. The male blinked, deducing that they were probably siblings on their strange behavior. It was strange….how he seemed to notice the advances and disadvantages of these people. He didn’t focus on it, it just *happened.* Strange, he was finding himself to be a rather difficult puzzle to explain. It was finally he stopped walking, causing the others to follow suit, turning to him. He sighed, looking between Chrom and his sister.

“What will you do with me? Am I to be your prisoner?” He asked cautiously.

Chrom in returned chuckled, shaking his head and offered him a warm smile, “Hah! No, you’ll be free once we establish your no enemy of Ylisse.”

“Ylisse?” the male furrowed his brows, “Is that where we are?”

“Gods, have you not heard of the halidom before?” Frederick came from behind, inspecting his face. He scoffed, shaking his head. “Ha! Someone pay this actor. He plays quite the fool!”

“Hey—” The cloaked male snapped and Frederick smirked in response, “His furrowed brows is especially convincing….”

“Fredrick please.” Chrom chided. Frederick backed away from the male but it was already a clear establishment that the two were on tense terms. Chrom sighed while the younger woman emitted a quiet, “Oh boy…”

“This land is known as the Halidom of Ylisse. Our ruler, Emmeryn, is called the exalt,” Chrom explained briefly, “But I suppose proper introductions are in order. My name is Chrom—but then, you already knew that. The delicate one here is my little sister, Lissa,”

So they were siblings after all. Strange he was able to deduce that. However the young woman stomped in place, swinging her arms in the air.

“I am not delicate! Hmph!” She turned from Chrom, facing the male with a forced smile. “Ignore my brother, please. He can be a bit thick sometimes.” Chrom turned with an insulted expression but Lissa smiled widely, continuing on, “But you’re lucky the Shepherds found you. Brigands would’ve been a rude awakening!”

“Brigands?” The male repeated, his face slightly paling at the thought. Oh no, she was right. He rather deal with them then bandits and thieves stripping him of everything, including his head. He grimaced, rubbing the back of his neck. He decided to press onto his other thoughts, specifically the Shepherds.

“Shepherds, you tend sheep?” He questioned, “In full armor??”

“He, it’s a dangerous job. Just ask Fredrick the Wary here.” Chrom joked. The male turned slightly to Frederick finding him slightly bowing at the comment. “It is a title I wear with pride. Gods forbid us if one of us keeps appropriate amount of caution.”

He glanced down momentarily to himself, humming. Now that he thought about it, Frederick had a point. Though he came out as a harsh figure, he had a realistic perceptive of what to expect. If brigands were a common sight in these lands, then it would be no doubt that he probably suspected him of being a brigand in disguise as such. With the act he was playing, it would’ve made perfect sense.

“I have every wish to trust you, stranger. But my station mandates otherwise.” Frederick told the cloaked male, receiving a nod.

“I understand, sir. I would do no less myself.” He answered.

“So, do you remember your name now?” Lissa butted in, tilting her head.

The man quirked his lips, rubbing his neck. Honestly, his name hasn’t come back. No, it was still merged with the fog that held control of his subconscious. No, it was not going to come up any time soon. He sighed gently, receiving a worried frown from Lissa. He looked up momentarily to the sky, hoping something could come to mind. Even something temporary—wait—

“Soren,”

“Huh?” Lissa snapped her attention back up as the name still lingered on his lips. The male smiled lightly, placing a hand on his chest. “Though I may not remember my name, it’s not to say I can’t make up one. You can call me Soren in the meantime.”

“Soren? Is that foreign?” Chrom began, “…Ah well, we’ll discuss it later. Once we head back to town—”

“CHROM! THE TOWN!” Lissa had turned, pointing down the path with the three males turning. Columns of smoke ranged from the church and houses that neared the river. Even from a distance Soren could tell people were fleeing from establishments.

“Damn it! The town is blaze! Those blasted brigands no doubt!” Chrom lividly snapped. “Frederick! Lissa! Quickly!”

“But what about him?” Frederick gestured towards Soren and Chrom turned. “Unless he’s on fire too, it can wait!”

“Aptly put, milord,”

“Let’s go already!” Lissa hurried, already taking the lead with Chrom following in suite with Frederick. Soren held a hand out, calling out a quick, “Hey wait—”

Yet it was too late seeing that they rushed over the hill. Soren placed a hand to his chin, humming softly about the difficult situation he was being placed in. He doesn’t even know his own name, what could he do on a battlefield?

*‘No, I know I can do something more,’* Soren reassured himself.

Soren looked at his body, analyzing the dark cloak and the under clothing he wore. Wait, something was tucked in his cloak. He reached in, feeling a leather binding book had been tucked

in. He removed it, opening the book to see what contents it held. It was strange, skimming through the book, it was as if he had read this a hundred times over. It wasn't an ordinary book, it was a tome, the sort that contained ancient magic. Soren murmured the lines that formed in his head when the book glowed, a seal forming below his feet. He held a hand immediately up, finding a ball of electricity fling from the center of his palm. Now that was something worth fighting with. Soren stumbled back from the fading seal, snapping his attention back towards the town. It wasn't much of another thought when he turned and began to sprint towards the town. Now that he knew he can fight, he also knew he could only go so far with a tome. He was going to need a sword too.

# Verge of History

Chapter Notes

Second chapter is out~

For the first few chapters it'll follow closely to the Awakening story-line before kind of getting more of the original work in there. So simply filler before we get into the dang action. All right, I hope you enjoy this~

*"History is a set of lies agreed upon"*

*Napoleon*

"Frederick, behind!" Chrom called out, heaving the falchion out of archer's corpse. He had no worries over Frederick, finding the knight bury his lance into a brigand.

"Lissa, stay close to me!" Chrom ordered with his sister giving an affirmative nod. It was worse than they imagined. A group of 8 brigands had rampaged through South Town. It was rather troublesome to rid of the two they had encountered setting the stores aflame. There were still six others running about, one of them was bound to be their leader.

"Chrom, what about the civilians?!" Lissa pointed out but Chrom exhaled, "We need to rid of the brigands before we can completely focus on helping the town's people."

"Hmmm!" Lissa hummed in annoyance causing Chrom to drop his head forward, sighing softly.

"All right, Frederick! Come on—" An arrow pierced through the air and Chrom quickly shielded Lissa from being hit. He turned hastily, looking across the river to see a bowman posed for another attack. Chrom hissed, blocking another arrow. Lissa cried, pointing forward, "Chrom!"

It seemed the archer wasn't alone on that side as a few civilians fled, chased by a man carrying a heavy axe. Chrom scoffed angrily, swiping his sword against another arrow and rushed towards the bridge. A gale ripped across the bridge however, knocking the young man back a good ten feet.

"Milord!" Frederick was the first to move, protecting Chrom from another strike.

Lissa was soon at his side, her staff glowing brilliantly before healing his minor wounds.

"A mage now too," Frederick grimaced at the sight, swinging his lance forward. Chrom grunted, picking himself from the ground as he picked up his falchion. He was ready to take on the mage for himself. Yet from the corner of his eyes he could also catch the archer turning towards their directions, aiming. Chrom scoffed as he lifted his sword, joining Frederick's side for combat.

"I'll defend you from the archer while you handle the mage," Frederick offered. Chrom nodded, his eyes set upon the mage, watching him flip open the tome.

Chrom was hastily to dodge the attack, easily sliding underneath, leaving the mage wide open. Yet, during this whole fiasco, trouble was still occurring that Frederick couldn't ignore. On the

other side of the bridge, a woman stumbled onto the ground, carrying a child closely to her. It was clear to see she was being chased, a brute brigand following with an axe over his shoulder. Frederick grimaced, wishing to rush to her aid but knew he had priority in protecting milord. Blast it! There was going to be a civilian causality if they didn't get there in time. The Axeman was right overhead the woman, swinging his axe proudly to rest on his shoulder.

"Say g'night," He sneered and swung the axe upwards.

"AHH!" The woman shrieked, shielding her child closely to her chest. Yet the axeman didn't move, instead he tumbled slightly. The woman lifted her head finding a sword had been driven through his chest. She quickly covered her child's eyes as the axeman tumbled over, his blood beginning to pool around him. She looked up to see a male heavily panting behind, removing the sword from the carcass.

"Go, you can run now, I'll cover for you," Soren informed her calmly.

The civilian looked at him nervously but nodded. She swallowed, picking her child up and hurrying past him as the bowman turned, aiming for Soren. Quickly lifting the tome, he casted the surge of lightning, completely catching the archer off guard. He was easily electrified, stumbling in place before falling over the railing into the river below. Soren exhaled heavily, wiping the sweat that trailed down his face. He looked over to the bridge, finding Chrom and Frederick with Lissa waiting close by.

"Chrom!" Soren called out.

Chrom lowered his guard momentarily, taken aback by the circumstances. Soren hurried over the bridge to reach the trio on the other side. Lissa smiled at the sight of the boy, waving him over as he finally was steps away. Soren hunched over, resting his hands on his knees in order to regain his breathe. He might have known how to fight but he didn't have all the stamina in a fight.

"You followed us?" Chrom acknowledged, "but why?"

"I'm…I'm not sure myself…" Soren replied weakly, waving an arm at an attempt to hurry his recovery, "Something didn't seem right leaving you guys to fight by yourselves. I mean, I know you're perfectly capable I'm sure….but I knew I had to do something to help."

"You can fight?" Chrom asked in astonishment. Soren swallowed and stood tall, meeting Chrom's gaze. He rested the sword on the ground for emphasis, holding the tome with his other hand. If it wasn't obvious by now, especially after nearly carving a hole into a brute moments ago, then holding out the weapons had to further the proof.

"It's apparent I can," Soren answered, flipping through the tome, "I know I may not be much, but I know how to formulate a plan, I can guide us through this fight."

"A tactician?" Frederick reiterated. Soren nodded in agreement.

"Of course, strength in numbers after all—just stay close" Chrom agreed, rather easily. Easier than what Soren was expecting. Well, there was no time for explanations on a battle field.

"I should warn you Soren, you need to remember that these men we are facing are practiced thieves and murderers, they grant us no quarters, it's either kill or be killed." Frederick warned and Soren nodded.

"Yes, I shall keep that closely in mind." Soren responded. His eyes narrowed to the next bridge, his eyes narrowing. It was clear to tell that they were handling a good majority of the brigands as there was only six by the time Soren arrived. Who knew how many were here before they came.

His eyes darted momentarily back to the trio, his curiosity beginning to peak. Who were these people?

“Was this all the brigands?”

“No, there’s still three left,” Chrom responded.

Their attention averted to across the river to find the remaining three brigands across the river, clearly ready for combat and their attention focused upon them. Looks like the boss remained with them as well, wielding a large axe that rested on his tattooed shoulder. Soren analyzed the remaining mercenary and mage, knowing with a simple set up, Frederick, Chrom, and himself could take them out without much of a thought.

“Is anyone hurt? It’d be foolish to leave a wound untreated.” Chrom acknowledged.

Frederick shook his head silently while Soren was the one to raise his hand. To get this sword was not an easy matter as it might have seen. It took a lot of effort, speed, and tactics….not to mention plain luck as he was able to snatch the sword from its owner, only leaving with a few scratches on the face. Chrom nodded, and turned seeing Lissa already marching over.

“Haha! Leave that to me~!” Lissa boosted proudly, walking to Soren and holding her staff up, “We’ll see whose delicate~” With a flick of her wrist, Soren could feel reenergized from the green glow emitting around him, exhaling in relief, “Thank you.”

“Mhmm!” Lissa smiled appreciatively and took a couple steps away from the trio, waving. “I’ll be over here!”

“All right Soren, do you have a suggestion on taking these three out?” Chrom decided to ask causing Soren to smirk gently.

“Judging from here, the mage can easily be taken out, just don’t engage him in far distance, he’ll have the upper advantage. I can easily handle him off, while Chrom can easily fend off the remaining mercenary here. Then Frederick can easily swoop in, finishing off the leader.”

“That sounds rather easy enough, we’ll be in a close proximity from each other that if needed, can assist one another.” Chrom recognized with Soren nodding. That was the idea in thought anyways.

“Are you all right with the plan Frederick?” Chrom called out.

The knight nodded with much less of a thought, already knowing his own strength. Soren and Chrom met each other’s gaze when the mage and mercenary positioned themselves on the bridge. It was a silent agreement when Soren rushed forward, throwing his hand out in the direction of the mage. The seal rumbled below his feet as the electrifying spell shot forward. The mage leapt to the side, nearly causing his own comrade to be hit by the spell. It was this stumble that allowed Chrom to charge in, catching the mercenary by surprise.

Now it was for divide and conquer.

Soren slid against the wooden flooring, easily brushing away the fire the mage casted. In mid-range combat the two would’ve been evenly matched, but fighting close combat—

“GAH!” The mercenary was cut down from behind, Chrom easily flicking his blade to the side as he casted his attention to Soren. Yet the tactician merely whirled around the flames and caught the tip of his blade down the neck of the mage, killing him without much resistance. Which left the perfect opening for Frederick to come charging in with his warhorse.

“Here sheepy sheepy, come to the slaughter,” The leader teased, beckoning his hand. Frederick remained un-phased by the taunt, swinging his lance out

“A knight of Ylisse would never fall to the likes,” Frederick retorted and easily dodged the thrown axe, lunging his lance into the chest of the leader.

“Hey! Are you all right, you can’t rush into danger like that.” Chrom chided as Soren scoffed gently, smiling at the concern over him. “I’m fine Chrom, don’t worry.”

Chrom however didn’t get rid of the concern, yet he smiled, patting his shoulder. “You’ve lent us your strength and that makes you a friend. Having an ally by my side gives me courage. I rather make sure you keep all your limbs intact.”

“Heh, I would hope so, there’s a tactical advantage in fighting alongside someone.” Soren informed, “It can help increase speed, protection, strength, morality.”

“Really? That’s rather useful to know,” Chrom admitted. Soren smiled back before looking over to the fallen leader, watching as Frederick brushed along the horse’s neck.

“Well, that’s the end of that,” Soren sighed in relief, wiping a brow. Lissa giggled, smiling warmly as she joined Soren’s side. “Lucky for the town, we were close by. But holy wow Soren! You were incredible!” Soren turned, raising a brow as Lissa smiled widely, resting a hand on her petite waist. “Swords, sorcery, AND tactics! Is there anything you can’t do?”

“Beside remember my own name, I’m sure there’s a few things I can add to the list. I’m flattered nonetheless,” Soren smiled gently as Chrom and Frederick joined by their sides. “You’re certainly no helpless victim that much is for sure.”

“Indeed. Perhaps you might even be capable of an explanation of how you came here?” Frederick pressed causing Soren to immediately become uneasy.

“I understand your skepticism, Sir Frederick. And I cannot explain why only some knowledge has returned to me. But please, believe me. I have shared all that I know.” Soren told him. Frederick’s settled stare had hardened once more and Soren’s heart dropped. He felt he was right back on Frederick’s cautious side again. Not that he can blame him. It was still far-fetched to believe a story such as his. Yet when a hand clamped on his shoulder, Soren couldn’t help but jump. Turning to find Chrom with a small smile, “You fought to save Ylissean lives. My heart says that’s enough.”

“And your mind, milord? Will you not heed its counsel as well?” Frederick countered. Chrom turned, keeping the firm, reassuring grip upon Soren’s shoulder.

“Frederick, the Shepherds could use someone with Soren’s talents.” Chrom explained, “We’ve brigands and unruly neighbors all looking to bloody our soil. Would you really have us lose such an able tactician?”

“Besides,” Chrom turned to face Soren, smiling “I believe his story, odd as it might be.”

Soren didn’t except any of the kind words on his part, finding himself slightly flustered over the matter. He ran a hand through his hair, exhaling gently with a small smile. “Tha-Thank you, Chrom.”

“So how about it? Will you join us, Soren?” Chrom offered a hand. Soren blinked gently, darting his attention between Lissa and Frederick. Beside the scowl Frederick was wearing, Lissa seemed ecstatic by the news, nodding her head in the gesture that he should accept. It was strange, how he

met these three on unlikely circumstances, now to be welcomed with open arms. Well, semi-open arms.

“I would be honored,” Soren smiled warmly, shaking Chrom’s hand firmly.

“Welcome aboard Soren, you’re officially a Shepherd.” Chrom announced with Lissa jumping in the background. “This is /great/! We’re going to have so much fun!” Lissa hugged Soren’s arm causing the tactician to almost loose balance, laughing gently.

“I’m not sure fun is the correct word to use, milady,” Frederick said.

Chrom laughed lightly at the comment, nodding in agreement. Lissa looked over Soren’s shoulder, sticking her tongue out playfully and grinned widely. It was finally then that civilians began to crowd the streets, thanking the four in their efforts of ridding the brigands. The bodies were taken away at Chrom’s request to be respectfully buried, and efforts to assist restoring the town were promised. Soren had stuck with Lissa and Frederick in the meantime, allowing Lissa to chat up a storm about the other Shepherds. It seemed this was no small game, there seemed to be eight others in this group from the sound of it. Soren didn’t press onto it but allowed Lissa to continue, stopping only when Chrom returned to the group.

“Did you notice, milord? The brigands spoke with a Plegian accent.” Frederick brought up causing Chrom to hum in agreement.

“Plegian? What’s that?” Soren requested.

Already he could catch Frederick looking at him and Soren’s gaze dropped away from his. Yet when he looked back, he could see a sort of pity through his eyes. Perhaps maybe he was finally realizing how he really was telling him the truth. Chrom turned, sighing gently and rested a hand on the hilt of his sword.

“Plegia is Ylisse’s westerly neighbor. They send small bands into our territory, hoping to instigate a war.” Chrom explained with a bit of an edge in his voice.

“And it’s the poor townsfolk who suffer! Totally innocent and totally helpless…” Lissa grimaced, looking around the battle-ridden town.

“They do have us, milady: Shepherds to protect the sheep. Do not be swept up in your anger. It will cloud your judgement.”

“I know I know. Don’t worry. I’ll get used to all of this.” Lissa exhaled calmly, a pose smile returning on her face. Soren blinked a few times, tilting his head.

“Milord! Wait!” The group of four turned to find a man rushing to them, “Please, you must stay the night!”

“Oh?” Chrom inquired.

“We are simple folk of simple means, but we would gladly toast your valor with a feast!” The man continued.

Frederick smiled, actually facing the man instead and bowed his head slightly forward. “A most generous offer, sir, and no doubt your hospitality would be grand…but I’m afraid we must hurry back to Ylisstol.”

“Dark meat only for me, medium well, and no salt in the soup. I simply—” Lissa was already ordering off to another man who was beside but only now took account of what Frederick had

said. “Wait what?! We’re not staying?? But Frederick, it’s nearly dark!”

“When night falls, we’ll camp. Eat off the land, make our bed of twigs and the like...” Frederick chuckled in amusement while Lissa’s face crestfallen in disbelief, “I believe you mentioned you would be ‘getting used to this’?”

“Sometimes I hate you,” Lissa grimaced. Soren hummed softly, resting the tome back into his coat before laying a hand on his side.

“You’ve quite the stern lieutenant there.” Soren accredited, earning a displeasing groan from Lissa. “Yeah, well, ‘stern’ is one name for it. I can think of a few others!”

Chrom chuckled, shaking his head. “Frederick only smiles when he’s about to bring down the axe.”

Soren stiffened in place, already having a rather detailed imagery of Frederick wielding an axe. Something he hoped he would be far away from if the moment happened.

“Duly noted.” Sore acknowledged. A cough rang from Frederick’s direction, earning the three to turn away to focus on him. “You do realize I AM still present?”

Chrom laughed, “Oh, we realize.”

“Milord remains as amusing as ever,” Frederick sighed, “Now then, shall we be going?”

“All right, all right. Ready to go, Soren? The capital isn’t far.” Chrom exclaimed, looking over to the red-haired tactician. “Of course,” Soren smiled. “As long as we’re prepared with vulnerary and such, I don’t see any means for delay.”

“At least /someone/ had thought about that.” Frederick couldn’t help a sigh of relief. Soren awkwardly nodded in agreement as Lissa huffed, complaining she had gotten some while they were waiting for Chrom. Soren laughed lightly at the comment when he began to realize the new route he was about to embark on. Joining the Shepherds, had he imagined himself being thrown into such a whirlwind of events this quickly?

Soren was grateful however, they were giving him a second chance. Perhaps with their help he’ll remember what had happened to him before. Maybe he’ll come across someone that will know who he is. To think he has some family out there in the world gives him slight comfort. He had only hope he was merely lost.

“Come on Soren! You’re falling behind!”

“O-Oh right!”

Well, he wasn’t going to think much about it. For now, it was time to begin anew.

# The Arrival of Change

Chapter Summary

> A day late but nevertheless it is here! I was dealing with job opportunities so I may or may not have to change how many times I publish due to this. 60-80 hours work schedule here I come! Yaaaaaaaay. Anyways, this chapter turned out to be a bit longer than I expected! I hope you enjoy this one! Until next time!

## Faith without Challenge is Nothing

"Is this over yet??" Lissa groaned.

For about three hours the four marched through, passing by nearby villages yet never stopping to one of them for rest—as much as Lissa begged for it. Frederick insisted that they could make as much footing that they can before the sun set. Yet even then, with the purple hues lingering the sky, they continued walking. Lissa continued to beg in the background for any solace in this madness but Chrom merely responded with that she was getting all the exercises she had lamented on during prior to joining him and Frederick on this mission.

Soren smiled gently at how comfortable it began to be around the trio, even Frederick seemed easier to walk beside. It was from here that tensions seemed to decrease between Soren and Frederick as they discussed over this war that the country Plegia wanted to start. As much as it seemed to make him more suspicious in the eyes of the knight, his curiosity was drawn to the idea of why would a kingdom want to start a bloodshed. Lissa piped into the conversation, calling their king to be the crazy reason for it. Their own king, it almost seemed absurd to imagine it but when Soren caught Chrom's glance, he noticed how the flash of aggression by the mere mention of the Mad King. Perhaps he should attempt to refrain from continuing the conversation. Instead, Soren distracted Lissa asking about the other Shepherds causing her to gleam in excitement.

"Well, there's Sumia, she's really nice, though a total klutz. Maribelle is my best friend, we practically grew up with each other. She can come off pretty cold though but she'll warm up to you….as long as you don't do something dumb."

"What classifies as dumb for her?" Soren dared to ask.

"Improper grammar, she reprimands anyone who doesn't speak in a sophisticated manner." Chrom joined, chuckling. Soren rubbed his neck, already making a mental note to speak as properly as possible. He would like one less person not to judge him right off the bat. Already trying to learn the names and characteristics of the other Shepherds was slightly giving him a headache. He sighed gently while Chrom turned to his direction, catching Soren's eye.

"Speaking of names, Soren, where did you pull that one from?" Chrom questioned.

Soren hummed gently, holding his chin gently. Soren slowed down gently, pulling open his coat revealing the grayish tome. He held it up in Chrom's direction causing the young man to hum in question. Chrom carefully took the book and examined it, quickly catching where Soren was inspired from. When Chrom didn't even make a noise, Lissa and Frederick stopped walking momentarily, raising a brow.

“I believe it was my favorite tome, since the author’s name was the first thing I thought of,” Soren answered awkwardly, rubbing his arm gently. Lissa and Frederick seemed to peek over Chrom’s shoulder, now curious. It was Lissa who next grew shock, now shaking Frederick’s arm. It was clear the knight did not make the connection.

“Really? This tome was made by the head strategist of the Greil Mercenaries, the famed group the Radiant Hero once led???” Chrom acknowledged, “This can’t be real—”

“Or it could be totally real! This tome could go for a fortune!” Lissa called out, reaching out for the book while Chrom held the book out of her reach. “Soren was one of the Radiant Hero’s most trusted allies! Oh my gosh! Soren, where did you even get such a thing?!?”

“If only I could tell you, I would like to know for myself.” Soren answered with a chuckle.

“It’s highly unusual that you would come across such an object. Perhaps it’s a family heirloom,” Frederick suggested. Soren hummed in agreement, Frederick however met his gaze and already Soren already had a feeling he was suspicious again. He wasn’t going to convince this man anytime soon of his innocence. One day perhaps, but today was not that day.

“Well, whatever it is, the name seems to fit you perfectly,” Chrom admitted. Soren laughed gently, scratching the back of his neck as Chrom offered it back, quick enough before Lissa could attempt to lunge at the book. “Let’s focus on walking though, we still have time before it completely becomes dark.” Chrom acknowledged with Lissa huffing.

“But it’s already dark!” Lissa insisted. Chrom merely waved a hand.

“I can still see perfectly fine, it’s not dark yet.”

The four continued walking down the darkened path, now the sky completely darkening with only the half-moon in the sky offering any sort of light. Their travels had led them deep within the forest, the path they were on completely becoming merged with the roots of trees and leaves that began to disguise the path. If it wasn’t for Frederick leading ahead with his warhorse, they probably would have gotten lost by now. Soren continued to read his tome, flipping through the pages to make up time to learn about strategies. Beside the tome he had, it seems he had a book filled with strategy, plans, formulas, all complied into simple notes that he was able to understand. With this extra information, he can certainly make himself more of use in the next battles to come.

Finally Lissa stopped, halting the other three men in their tracks.

“What’s wrong?” Chrom concerned.

“I told you—it’s getting dark already!” Lissa scowled, retching back as the bugs swarmed, “Ech! And now the bugs are out! Noisy, disgusting bugs that buzz around and crawl all over and bite when—”

Lissa suddenly gagged, her hands flying to her mouth, “Agh! Won goph in mah mouph! BLECH! PTOOEY!” Lissa hacked as Chrom laughed gently behind. “Aw, come on now, Lissa. Hardship builds character. Want to help me gather firewood?” Lissa continued spitting, grimacing with her shoulders slumped and wiping her mouth, “I think I swallowed it—eck—i’ll pass on finding firewood.”

“Well, bugs are known to be nutritious.” Soren noted dryly. Lissa snapped her attention at Soren causing the tactician to look up momentarily. Did he say something wrong?

“See! I think I’ve built QUITE enough character for one day!” Lissa pounced in place causing Soren to sigh gently. Perhaps only aid in her efforts. A growl rumbled from his stomach and he

winched lightly, already knowing his headache was only to increase. Gods, he hadn't even noticed he was hungry all this time. Well, to be fair, he had merely awoken hours ago with no memories, stopped brigands raiding a town, and was marching all these hours, his mind had been well occupied.

"Well, we should think about food. I don't know about you, but I'm starving. I don't think bugs will suffice on nutrients for me." Soren teased causing Lissa to turn, her cheeks tinted pink.

"HEY!" Frederick seemed to chuckle at that response, heeding his horse to a stop. "Yes, I should think a little hunting and gathering is in order. Now, who wants to clear a campsite?"

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Soren and Lissa decided to clear a space for the camp, Frederick and Chrom volunteered to collect the firewood and hunt for something in the meantime. Clearing the space was easier than he had imagined, and took it upon himself to start the fire once Chrom had delivered the amount of wood needed. Finding he had actually had another tome on himself, Soren now used a Fire spell in order to light the wood. Lissa was impressed, settling herself near the fire and held her hands out to warm herself up. Soren had sat across from her, returning to his readings. It was not long when Frederick and Chrom returned, slugging behind a fairly….different sort of game then Soren expected.

"BEAR?!" Lissa seemed aghast as Frederick and Chrom dropped the beast to the side. It seemed rather large too. Soren had briefly looked over from his book, calculating it might've been a maturing cub or a young adult. It still would've put up a great deal of a fight. However his eyes slowly fell upon Frederick, finding him cleaning out his lance before slowly burying his face into the paper. He could only imagine that Frederick dropped the axe on him. It was wise not to make eye-contact with him. Lissa groaned, sitting beside Soren as Frederick began working on cleaning the animal, working off all the hair and following the natural skin to slowly remove it from the muscles below.

"Eck…I hate bear," Lissa remarked. Soren looked over to her before briefly looking to the site, nodding slowly. "I'm not sure what bear even tastes like….i'm sure it's an experience."

"I can tell you it's quite one you'll never forget," Lissa grimaced. "Meat should not smell like old boots! Wait, I take that back—boots smell better."

Soren laughed lightly causing the young woman to look at him, her lips pouting slightly. "What's so funny?"

"Oh it's nothing. You're just passionate about that. It's good, but it's also to remember experience makes also grow stronger and wiser, even if we don't enjoy it." Soren explained to her.

Lissa hummed but nodded nevertheless. Her eyes continued to wander over to the meat. Frederick was certainly practiced when it came to fabricating as he managed to break apart the animal in about 10 minutes. It seemed clear that Frederick had a prior knowledge of this and as continued to fabricate the remainder of the meat onto skewers. They carried spices in another bag and finally it seemed the meat was finally staked by the ends of the fire, allowing the meat to cook along the tips of the flames. Soren hadn't expected himself to stare so longingly as the meat seared and charred under the intense heat. Maybe he was hungrier than he had thought he was. Finally the meat was cooked and passed along the four of them. Chrom seemed to be eating faster than anyone else while Frederick and Lissa kept this unpleasant look their face at the sight of the meat.

"Mmm…it's been too long since I last had bear meat. Delicious!" Chrom admitted. He caught sight of his younger sister though. "What's wrong, Lissa? Dig in."

Lissa grimaced at the sight of the skewered meat, sticking her tongue out in disgust.

“Pass! Gods, couldn’t you spear us an animal normal people eat for once?” Lissa demanded turning to Frederick, “I mean, come on! Who eats bear?! You’re meddling with the food chain! Right Soren?”

Soren tore at the charred corner, licking his lips of the succulent flavors. Frederick was the one to have seasoned this gamey meat but Gods, whatever he did was delicious. Soren didn’t even care if it was still a little on the medium side, he was absolutely starving. He really must have been on the verge of starvation the way he greedily ate the meal. From across him, Lissa seemed drop her shoulders in disappointment.

Lissa sighed, “I suppose a person would enjoy just about anything after not eating for days…”

“Just eat it Lissa, meat is meat.” Chrom chided with a smile.

Soren continued to feast on the food, his mind starting to wander away from the conversation. To the expectations he may have soon enough. It shouldn’t be hard to organize a small group like this. They seemed to have their heart set in the right place. Lissa and Frederick seemed to have argued over the aspect of experience to what sounded like Frederick’s own distaste in gamey meats. It was rather ironic that he could roast something so well but not have the guts to try it. Finally the hours drew by as Chrom and Lissa had dozed off, with Frederick and Soren taking first watch. It would’ve been Soren taking the first watch……but Frederick clearly did not trust the man to do it alone. They remained sitting up, Frederick tending to the fire.

“You’re not going to remove your armor?” Soren questioned with a brow. “Isn’t that….uncomfortable?”

“It may be but out here in the wilderness, I would rather be armed to the tooth rather than scrambling for defense.” Frederick murmured. Soren hummed softly, crossing his arms behind his head. They shielded him from the cold ground and his eyes darted upwards to the starry sky. It felt…relaxing to be surrounded by people that he could trust.

“Soren, as I have your attention at the moment,” Soren looked over to face Frederick properly, raising a brow. “I need to have your word that you’re claims are true…” Soren’s expression soured and he properly sat up, facing Frederick and met his gaze.

“Sir Frederick, I do not mean you, Chrom, Lissa, or anyone else harm at all. That is not my intention. I honestly don’t remember anything—my name—my family—my own memories, none of them.” Soren’s voice dropped slightly, looking to the tome that rested beside him. He quirked his lips, holding the book up gently and brushing the surface of the cover gently. “To not have a purpose or a place to call home, I feel so lost right now. But as strange as the circumstances have unfolded, I feel like I have a new purpose, something I can work vigilantly for a greater good.”

Frederick didn’t turn away from his gaze but there was something that Soren wasn’t able to detect within his eyes. Soren hadn’t inched, afraid if he were to break that stone glance that Frederick would see nothing more than a liar. After moments of this tense staring, Frederick focused once more upon the fires that kindled.

“Soren, do not doubt that I don’t find your claims to be completely false. I can assume that something horrid had befallen on you to cause this terrible accident. I only say what I have to because I need to. So if I were to continue pursue the possibility of you being a traitor, it is only in my duty, not in my personal belief.”

Soren’s shoulders relaxed and he slouched slightly to relax his arm against the ground.

“No, I understand Sir Frederick the Wary.” Soren could see from the corner of his eye Frederick’s lips curled slightly into a smirk before flashing away as quickly as it came. Then a yawn rang from beside Soren and he looked over to find Chrom sitting up, yawning loudly again.

“I see you’re awake, milord.” Frederick acknowledged, tossing the stick into the fire. Chrom nodded and stretched his arms above his head. “You and Soren can rest now, I’ll take this watch.” Chrom informed the knight. Frederick nodded along with Soren and both had went down to rest.

It took some time but he finally settled down and went to sleep.

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*Fog engulfed the world he was currently experiencing. The sweat that trailed his face had only increased as he took notice how hot it was. Flames began to lick around his body and screams began to pierce the very realm. Screams of people fleeing for their lives as their villages burned to the ground, strange moving warriors raising their weapons at the people that could not flee fast enough.*

*What—what was this!?*

*The flames suddenly licked away from the burning village, now moving upon a vast castle with smoke pouring from an opened entrance. From a distance, soldiers combated against the strange warriors, causality guaranteed on both sides.*

***So ends the human race. The future is built upon the past…but your kind shall never see it!***

***Hahahaha, your mother and father are dead—now it is your time to join their fate!***

*A woman’s scream pierced through the veil, invoking a horrible sense of demise within his being.*

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Soren abruptly sat up, gasping for air as he looked around. The woman, no wait, the beast, what —No, it was merely a dream. It had to be. Soren rubbed his face wearily, groaning softly into his palms. Yet when Soren’s eyes raised to the sky, he gasped, finding the night sky was alit in a hellish red. Fire, there was a fire. Soren was about to awaken Chrom when he looked over, noticing both Chrom and Lissa were both missing. No. Oh Gods, this was not good.

“Frederick! Frederick!” Soren had crawled over to the sleeping knight, shaking him rather aggressively. It was a matter of seconds before he bolted up. Then his eyes landed on Soren.

“What—”

“Chrom and Lissa are gone!” Soren informed him. Those names triggered Frederick to snap his attention over, heaving heavily at the site of the missing siblings. “Blasted!” Frederick slammed his fist upon the dirt, quickly heaving himself up and rushing over to his awakened warhorse. “Get on,” Frederick commanded.

Soren didn’t hesitate as he grabbed Frederick’s extended arm and hurled himself onto the warhorse. With a firm snap of the reins, his horse bolted down the darkened forest path. Even from their position within the woods, the intense heat of the flames could be felt. Something had happened, a tremor, an earth quake. Gods, how could they not feel that beforehand. Soren scoffed, pulling his tome from his pocket, looking around for any possible bandits or—wait. Soren’s eyes narrowed as he caught several bodies moving hastily towards their direction.

“What are those?” Soren noticed they all seemed to be carrying weapons.

“Frederick!” Soren had to grip him by his arm to get the paladin to turn his head. The monster was at their side, an axe raising right at them. The war horse neighed loudly as Frederick turned to slam his lance into the forehead of the man. He groaned before….evaporating into a violet fog. Frederick hissed, swinging his lance back as he checked the blade. Absolutely no blood. These were certainly not men, they seemed to be reanimated beings. Frederick snapped his attention back, seeing the rest of the group having turned their attention on the duo. The knight hissed, pulling at the reins and turned. Soren flipped through his tome and held his arm out.

“Thunder!”

One of the creatures fell, tumbling on the ground as Frederick’s warhorse bolted away. These warriors—monsters, moved faster than Soren could even imagine. Suddenly the horse bucked into the air, sending Soren falling off the stead while Frederick remained, somehow managing to settle his horse back on the ground. “Blasted! They’ve already surrounded us.” Frederick huffed, whirling his lance with a sturdy grip. Soren picked himself from the ground, holding the tome widely opened. They were outnumbered, with four of the monsters creeping in front of them and two others from behind. Soren narrowed his eyes, trying to find an escape route for at least Frederick to charge out in order to find Chrom and Lissa.

Yet as the two monsters from behind seemed to charge, Soren had only turned right in time to witness one of them being completely taken out. In a blur, the second one had been stabbed through the gut, the smog revealing—a young male. The sword withdrew and gestured behind to the opening that was behind. The flames seemed to illuminate brightly from over there. Frederick had now turned as well, already on guard against the new stranger.

“Go, I’ve cut a path,” The male spoke quickly, “Your friends are there.”

Chrom and Lissa. Soren and Frederick met each other’s gaze before looking down the path to the young male. Soren narrowed his eyes, attempting to study out the person in front of them. Even from the darkness it was apparent that he was fairly skilled with a sword. Yet why did he come all this way to help them? Who was he?

“Soren, let’s go, we need to reach the others.” Frederick’s harsh tone snapped Soren from examining any further. He quickly took the male’s extended arm and gripped onto the saddle. With a fierce tug, the warhorse sprinted past the young male. Soren snapped his attention back, watching as the young male took a stance…strikingly similar to Chrom’s…before engaging against the rest of the monsters. Soren sighed gently before looking ahead. The duo finally made it out of the forest and found indeed Lissa and Chrom were out here.

“Milord! Milady! Are you hurt?” Frederick called out loudly.

“Frederick! Soren!” Lissa’s cries were apparent from even their distance as the warhorse covered ground. Moments after, Soren found himself slipping off and rushing over, panting gently. The scene at hand seemed up right fictional, the lava that scorched the land creating a wall from the monsters that seemed to wade in front of them. It seems they were beginning to spread in numbers, a rather horrifying thought to imagine if they continued to spread.

“Are such horrific creatures commonplace in these land??” Soren demanded.

“They’re not from Ylisse, I promise you that.” Chrom answered curtly.

When Frederick finally settled his horse down, he slid off his horse, looking to the three. “No one is injured, then? Thank the gods….”

“Thank the masked man who saved me! If it wasn’t for him I’d be…hey where did he go?” Lissa spun around while Chrom looked as well. Frederick and Soren shared a glance, now recalling the person they had briefly past to in the woods, the one that gave them the path to cut across and head towards Chrom and Lissa. So it seemed the masked man was fighting on their side.

“We can worry about him later, AFTER we put these things…to the blade.” Frederick declared.

“Lissa stay with Frederick, do you hear me?” Lissa nodded at Chrom’s request, reaching out for the knight’s extended arm and was easily pulled upon to sit behind the knight. After that trauma, she would stay close to the man who would stake any of those monsters from even laying a finger on her.

“Captain Chrom! Wait! I’m coming!” Chrom reeled back on his attack, Soren quickly taking the shot of lightning that easily eradicated the monster.

Both the men turned when heavy hoofs followed with a loud and aggressive yell. It seemed a creature was coming from behind yet before it could even raise its blade, a lance had speared through its neck. The creature gargled before evaporating in a dark haze. What was left behind was a brown stallion, and a woman adorned in full red armor. Unlike’s Frederick’s steed, her steed was not covered as nearly much armor, already suggesting that she was a lower rank knight.

“Agh, I knew I shouldn’ta left you guys.” The woman crudely remarked, swiping her lance out. “All right, you ash-faced freaks! Who else wants to try my lance on for size!”

“Sully, good seeing you again,” Chrom remarked causing the woman behind him to scoff. “Honestly Chrom, I should be sticking this right up your—”

“Hold, milady!” Now the three had turned to find another man rushing out of the woods. Unlike Sully, he wore a more regal attire.

“Muh?”

“Life may be long, but attraction is fleeting! Would you leave me in your sweet dust? Leave war to the warriors, dear bird! A beauty such as you need wage only love.” The man proclaimed, his accent clearly foreign to that of Ylisse.

“….The hell are you?” Sully demanded.

“Ha! Is the lady intrigued? Of course you are—it’s only natural. I am myth and legend! I am he who strides large across history’s greatest stage! The man who puts the “arch” in “archer”! My name, dear lady, is Vi—”

“Uhh…shouldn’t we focus on the battle at hand?” Soren gestured back to the creatures that had made great distance, nearing them by only 100 feet.

“Sorry, Ruffles—no time for this. Onward!” Sully snapped the reins, now charging forward into battle as the regal man was left in a stump.

“Virion! Er my name! It’s Virion! Where are you going?! Pray at least tell me your name!”

“Um…I think she’s long gone Virion, perhaps another time?” Soren offered as the pompous man sighed, “Please then, gentlemen, allow me to accompany you, at least! For without her, mine is a cold, empty world…” Virion lamented.

“I’m sure she’ll love to hear you say that to her afterwards,” Chrom joked, “But I see you have bow and arrows at arm.”

“I, as it happens, am an archer! The archest of archers, in fact. As such, I attack most effectively from a distance so kindly keep me one step away from peril, and I shall do the same for you.” Virion retrieved an arrow from his back, pulling the arrow hastily from the bow with an aim and launched it. Both Soren and Chrom whipped their heads behind them, finding that the arrow had hit its target, killing another of those creatures.

“Point taken,” Chrom admitted. Soren already patted Chrom’s arm, nodding gently. “Change of tactics, go and assist Sully Chrom, Virion and I shall give you cover from behind,”

Chrom nodded in agreement, hurrying over to catch up with the knight. She aggressively was knocking monsters left and right as Chrom followed behind with the finishing land. Soren instructed Virion briefly and the noble seemed to understand, quickly taking to action as he shot at the monsters that were making their way from the distance.

“Beautiful, no?” Virion admired while Soren sighed, shaking his head as he flipped his tome open. “Thunder!” Another creature had been taken out without a hitch. With the four on offense and Frederick easily destroying any that choice to come close, it was within minutes that the enemy’s numbers were slashed to the last one. Finally, the battle came to the end as the final beast had disappeared from sight, leaving the remaining Shepherds panting. Taking a few moments of the silence, Lissa was quick to slip off from Frederick’s steed, hurrying over to heal those that had been injured, not without greeting Sully warmly.

“It seems the all the creature are vanquished. The young man here took care of the others.” Now eyes were directed to the man that had returned from the forest. He had remained absolutely quiet as the others merely glanced amongst each other before landing on him again. A strange man that arrived at a strange time. He certainly was useful in battle but he didn’t participate with them in combat. A lone wolf it seemed.

“Um, I never got to thank you…for before. So thank you. You were very brave.” Lissa thanked kindly, her cheeks tinted pink. Chrom smiled as well, nodding his head forward as thanks.

“You saved my sister’s life. My name is Chrom. Might I ask yours?”

“You may call me Marth.” The young man answered.

“Marth? After the heroic king of old?” Chrom smiled, “You certainly fight like a hero. Where did you learn your way with a sword?”

“I’m not here to talk about me.” The man cut in, “This world teeters at the brink of a horrible calamity. What you saw tonight was a prelude. You have been warned…”

”Huh? What’s teetering where now?! Wait!” Lissa slumped as Marth turned away, walking away from the group and eventually out of sight. “Not much for conversation…” Soren acknowledged. Lissa sighed, a blush still etched on her face as she crossed her arms, sighing softly.

“It appears his skills lie elsewhere. I wager we’ll hear his name again…but for now I’m more concerned about the capital. We should make haste.” Frederick suggested. Sully brushed along her horse's neck, sighing. “Wait, what about Ruffles here?” Sully demanded, pointing to the man, clearly ignoring his flirtation habits and proclaiming his wishes for her to marry him. It looked like she was ready to kick the man down to the ground. Repeatedly. Chrom turned to Virion, humming softly, “He can come along as well, he certainly proved his worth out there in the battle.”

Sully scoffed, her face souring at the answer while Virion’s absolutely lit up. “I shall be your most willing servant, and you, in turn, will give my life purpose~”

Sully groaned, snapping at her reins to join along Frederick as the group began to march towards Ylisse, “Anything to shut you up!”

# New Purpose

Chapter Summary

> Another chapter is out folks, so short and sweet...ugh...I can't find apartments in Phoenix, Arizona. Ugh, i'm not made of money world. Not made of money. If any body has random advice, i'd appreciate it. BUT ANYWAYS. ENJOY THE STORY EVERYONE~

"So this is Ylisstol, capital of Ylisse. I've never seen so many people!"

Soren looked around in awe at the crowds of people that flooded the streets. The shops were opened and flourishing proudly as consumers were flocking the stands. The group of six managed to weave themselves through the crowd, Virion needing a good smack on the head once he began to flirt with *every single* woman on the street. Sully was dragging the noble by the collar, huffing angrily about the circumstances that had befallen on her. Frederick remained on foot with his horse pacing behind, his attention scanning the entire street.

"It appears the capital was spared the chaos we encountered, thank the gods." Frederick sighed in relief, guiding his horse by the reins, "I see no evidence of the great quake. It must've been limited to the forest."

"Well that's a relief!" Lissa agreed. "That would've one heck of a mess."

"No doubt, with all these people as well—" Soren's voice was drowned out as the crowd had begun to murmur loudly, cheering following shortly after. Soren blinked widely as both Frederick and Sully moved their horses to the side—as if it was second nature. "Look! The Exalt has come to see us!" Further down the street, the crowd had begun to part from the middle of the street, clapping widely as a group of what seemed to be royalty was approaching. A young woman, no younger than her mid-twenties was being led by knights with Pegasus as their steeds. Judging by the adorning crown that haloed behind her golden locks, she seemed to be the Exalt of Ylisse.

"The exalt is your ruler, yes?" Soren turned with a raise brow as Frederick followed his gaze, "Ah, yes. Her name is Lady Emmeryn."

"Is it safe for her to walk among commoners like this?" Soren questioned. Frederick sighed but ultimately nodded in agreement.

"The Exalt is a symbol of peace—Ylisse's most prized quality. Long ago, at the dawn of our age, the fell dragon tried to destroy the world. But the first exalt joined forces with the divine dragon and laid the beast low," The Exalt stopped, bending down to the children that called for attention. They seemed extremely excited as she brushed their heads, blessing them with Naga's safe-guard. "Exalt Emmeryn reminds us all of the peace we fought for then."

"With Plegia poking at our borders, the people need her. She's a calming presence, when some might otherwise call for war." Chrom added, resting against the wall as he kept a careful eye on the Exalt. Soren blinked, admiring the young woman at hand. She seemed to be thrown a very large responsible at such a young age. It seemed the King and Queen had passed away, leaving her to rule the entire halidom at its greatest time of need.

“Then the Ylissean people are indeed lucky to have her.” Soren remarked.

Lissa giggled in agreement, swinging her arms, “She’s also the best big sister anyone could ask for!”

Soren smiled, nodding slowly in agreement. The woman seemed to be remarkable at this age to be ruling an entire halidom, especially with siblings such as Chrom and Lissa, “Yes, I imagine she…” Soren choked on his words, suddenly his thoughts piecing together what Lissa had said. “Wait, what? She’s your…s-sister?” Soren stuttered.

“But wouldn’t that make you and Chrom…?” Frederick laughed positively at this point, “The prince and princess of the realm, yes, you remember Chrom’s name and not this?” Frederick asked but Soren’s shoulders slumped at the idea that he’s been traveling with royalty this whole time. The way that Chrom and Lissa acted did not seem anything that royalty should be like. While Lady Emmeryn seemed to have this vibe of holiness, pureness and goodness, Chrom and Lissa were much more approachable, joking around teasing Frederick around constantly. It didn’t seem like what normal royals would act like. Soren gritted his teeth lightly.

“Wait—I thought you were shepherds?!” Soren stumbled upon his words when Frederick chuckled besides, already having the idea of what Soren was going to say. “And so we are…in a manner of speaking. We just have a LOT of sheep.” Chrom joked, nudging Soren’s side. Yet at this point Soren nearly was ready to throw himself on the ground and beg forgiveness of his actions.

“C-Chrom—I mean, prince Chrom! Sire!” Soren slapped his hands to his face, groaning loudly. They were royalty. Gods, he’s been acting quite the fool. “Forgive my dreadful manner…”

“Just Chrom is fine. I’ve never been much for formalities.” Chrom laughed as Soren peeked through his fingers. “The prince and princess….gods.” Soren rubbed his face, allowing the new information to sink in, “that explains why Frederick tolerates all the teasing, eh?”

“Indeed. Oh, the sacrifices I make for the good of the realm….” Frederick exasperated with Lissa giggling mirthfully. Chrom smiled before looking to see the crowds dispersing with the Exalt Emmeryn having turned completely to return to the large castle that waited down the path.

“It looks like Emm is returning to the palace. Would you like to meet her?” Chrom turned to Soren with a smile as he stood there dumbfounded at the offer. Meet Lady Emmeryn, the becon of peace and hope in Ylisse? Yes. Just yes. The honor is too great.

“Of course we would love to accompany thee to see the radiant, gorgeous Exalt—” Virion’s collar was grabbed from behind with Sully gently tugging the reins of her horse to follow. “No ruffles, you’re not allowed, you’re comin’ with me to the Garrison. Need to get you all settled in.” Sully enforced. Virion lost his composure momentarily while Frederick turned to Sully before the woman could leave the vicinity.

“Sully, would you mind taking Tulpar back as well. Sumia insisted on brushing his mane when we had returned.” Frederick told Sully. The red-haired woman laughed heartily, snatching the reins from the knight. “Of course she said something like that. Fine Commander, here—” Now she handed her own reins to Virion as she slapped his shoulder. “At least you can be some use here. We’ll meet back with you guys later in the Garrison.”

“Later Sully!” Lissa waved energetically as Chrom gestured for them to follow as the four now continued on to the castle.

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Heading up the ridiculously enormous amount of stairs that took them quiet a distance from the town, they were met with large, spacious courtyard that was lined with the Pegasi knights. Many seemed to be idly at guard while it seemed some recruits seemed to be running through the further most corner of the courtyard. Many saluted once the group was in sight causing Soren to slightly tuck his collar up to hide his face. It was quickly becoming a reality that Chrom and Lissa were indeed royalty. He was settling with the idea better but now he understood better than ever why Frederick was so on guard. Probably why he's still on guard even to this moment. Finally entering into the castle, they were met with a open, wide hallway with chandeliers that shimmered above.

Following down past the columns and mauve carpet, there stood the Exalt, talking carefully to the woman in armor beside her. Perhaps that was the captain of the knights or at least the captain of the Pegasus knights. Emmeryn's eyes casted towards the groups direction and a warm smiled enveloped her lips.

"Chrom! Lissa! Welcome home! Oh and good day to you, Frederick," Emmeryn bowed her head down slightly as Frederick rested a hand over his chest, bowing. Lissa however immediately greeted her sister with a hug as the elder returned the hug, giggling.

"How fared you all?" She asked.

"Well—we shouldn't have any bandit problems for a while." Chrom reported, smiling. Emmeryn returned the smile, nodding. "Wonderful. And our people?"

"Safe as can be. But we still need to watch the borders. The brigands crossed over from Plegia." Emmeryn's smile faded slightly as she retained her straightened posture, folding her hands over each other. The woman beside closed her eyes, bowing her head slightly forward.

"Forgive me, milord. My Pegasus knights should have intercepted them." She responded. Looks like she was the Captain of the Pegasus knights after all. Chrom shook his head from her response though as he rested a hand on her shoulder.

"No, Phila. Your duty was here, with the Exalt." Chrom told her. Lissa giggled as she punched the air childishly. "And besides, we had it handled." Lissa reassured.

"Ah, you speak of your new companion here?" Emmeryn's kind gaze now was on Soren has he straightened his posture immediately. She smiled softly as Chrom turned to face him, smiling as well.

"This is Soren, he fought bravely with us against the brigands. I've decided to make him a Shepherd." Chrom announced as he patted Soren's back, earning a grunt from the tactician. Soren however remained with a positive attitude when the Exalt seemed to be making direct eye contact with him, her smile never fading. She truly had a radiant, kind vibe that didn't make her entirely approachable.

"It sounds as though Ylisse owes you a debt of gratitude, Soren." Emmeryn thanked.

"Not at all, milady! Ah, no, really, it was simply the right thing to do," Soren scratched his cheek, averting his eyes away from her as she smiled warmly at the response. Jeezes he felt like he was blushing like an idiot already. A cough rang from beside and Emmeryn's gaze was torn away to the stoic Frederick as he bowed slightly. "Forgive me, Your Grace but I must speak. Soren claims to have lost his memory, but it is only that; a claim."

Soren stiffened at the sound of the accusation but exhaled shakily, already noticing Chrom snapping his attention to Frederick with narrowed eyes. No, Frederick had his reasons for this, he explained it quite clearly at the camp fire. He had no personal agenda against him, it was only a

matter of duty as being the royal guard to the prince and princesses of this realm. It was clear that as a knight of Ylisse, no, the knight that defended the royal family, this was his utmost priority.

“We cannot rule out the possibility that he is a brigand himself or even a Plegian spy.” Frederick finished. Chrom gritted his teeth lightly before turning to face his sister once more. Her smiled faded slightly yet she kept the calm pose.

“Yet you allowed him into the castle, Chrom,” She focused her attention on her brother, “Does this man have your trust?” She asked. Chrom met her gaze, never once hesitating as he nodded.

“Yes. He risked his life for our people, Emm. I say that is more than enough to gain my trust.” Chrom answered. Emmeryn then turned her attention back on Soren, her eyes examining every inch of him. Soren did the best he could with keeping eye contact with her when seconds later, she smiled.

“Well then, Soren…it seems you’ve earned Chrom’s faith, and as such you have mine as well.” She told him. Soren exhaled heavily, almost feeling the boulder fall off his shoulders.

“Milady…” Soren bowed in respect at the utter kindness. Her smile never passed as she even moved her attention to Frederick, bowing her head.

“But thank you, Frederick, for your prudence as always.” Emmeryn thanked, “Chrom and Lissa are blessed to have so tireless of a guardian. I do hope they remember to mention that from time to time…”

“They occasionally express something akin to gratitude, Your Grace.” Frederick replied with a bow. Soren could only imagine the akin was all the teasing that Chrom and Lissa put Frederick through. The man should be rewarded with a medal of honor at this point of his career. His eyes then fell upon Phila.

“Phila, I assume you’ve heard about the deathly creatures we encountered, yes?” Frederick questioned. Phila frowned, nodding gently. “Yes, milord. They’ve been sighted all across Ylisse.” All across Ylisse?

Soren frowned at the thought of those terrible monsters raging across the continent. He hoped that whatever was causing this situation would be dealt swiftly. Or at least find out the source of all these mysterious monsters and how they came here.

“It is concerning, now that it is an added endangerment to our people,” Emmeryn admitted with a soft sigh. She turned to look over at her brother.

“Chrom, we are about to hold council. I was hoping you could join us.” She expressed as Chrom nodded his head rather quickly, “Of course.”

Lissa hummed loudly, clutching onto Soren’s arm suddenly. Soren almost stumbled back at the mere force that she had grabbed him causing her to giggle.

“I think that’s our cue, Soren! C’mon, there’s a place I want to show you!” Lissa insisted. Soren didn’t really have much choice as Lissa basically dragged him down the hall. Rushing past maids and servants alike, they were now in the behind the castle, running past extensive training between random knights sparing while an elder commander looked on.

“Are these the knights of Ylisse?” Soren questioned as Lissa nodded energetically. “Yup! Oh—here!!” Lissa tugged Soren’s towards a large, built tent. They entered through the flap, Soren nearly loosing his stepping as he was meant with a large amount of supplies, weapons stacked neatly in one corner, crates, it seemed like one giant war room.

“Here we are! The Shepherds’s garrison!” Lissa extended her arms out proudly, “go on, make yourself at home!” Soren walked in, his eyes scanning around as the woman and man behind Lissa turned. Yet the one that didn’t need to present herself was the woman bolting up from her chair on the other side of the room.

“Lissa, my treasure! Are you all right? I’ve been on pins and needles!” The woman hurriedly rushed over, stopping only steps away from the young princess and elegantly walked over to her, giving her a brief hug.

“Oh, hey, Maribelle!” Lissa greeted the young woman. Maribelle in turn frowned distressfully, holding her parasol carefully. “Oh. hey,” yourself! I’ve sprouted fourteen grey hairs fretting over you!” Maribelle rebunked causing the young princess to laugh.

“Aw, you worry too much. I can handle a battle or two!” Lissa smiled widely yet her face soured, “Although I could do without the bugs and the bear barbecue…”

“Hey, squirt! Where’s Chrom?” The man interrupted from behind. Lissa pouted, resting her knuckles against her waist. “I bet he had a rough time out there without ol’ Teach and his trusty axe!”

“Oh so you’re ‘Teach’ now Vaike, is that it? And here I thought people were just born lacking wits. It can be taught?” Lissa mocked.

“Ha! Never doubt the Vaike!” Seconds passed before Vaike’s proud stance slacked, “Wait, was that an insult?”

“Beg pardon, but when might we see the captain?” The woman beside entered the conversation, fiddling with her fingers.

“Poor Sumia. She’s simply been beside herself with concern. Her eyes were scanning the horizon all day during training. She might have earned fewer bruises fighting blindfolded.” Maribelle noted causing Sumia to blush in embarrassment.

“Aw, that’s so sweet of you to worry about Chrom, Sumia.” Lissa acknowledged. Sumia flustered, smiling softly. “Worry? Well, I…he’s our captain and our prince—of course I’d worry!”

“So who’s the stranger?” Vaike looked over now to Soren, smirking lightly. Lissa however rolled her eyes, waving her hand at the comment, “No one’s stranger than you, Vaike.”

“HEY!”

“BUT allow me to introduce Soren, tada! He just joined the Shepherds! Chrom’s made him our new tactician. You should see all the tricks he’s got up his sleeve!” Lissa introduced. Soren waved as Sumia smiled.

“Oh, so he was the gentleman Virion was speaking of,” Sumia acknowledged as Vaike waved his hand at the comment. “Oh yeah? Can he do this?”

Vaike let out a large burp while the three ladies grimaced at the sound, Soren merely chuckled. He surely was an interesting fellow. “Yes, thank you for the warm greeting, and I’m sure I have much to learn in the belching arts, ‘Teach.’” Soren acknowledged, “In any case, it’s a pleasure to make all of your acquaintances.”

“Ugh, Vaike! That was abhorrent! Must you baseborn oafs pollute even the air with your buffoonery?” Maribelle sneered, snapping her attention away from Vaike. Yet they now focused

on Soren, a scowl permeant upon her face. “And you Soren! Don’t encourage him! I’d hoped you were cut from finer cloth! Hmph!” Maribelle snapped her attention away again, huffing and walked away from the four.

Sumia sighed, brushing her braided locks away from her face. “Don’t take it to heart, Soren. Maribelle warms to people slowly.” Lissa however giggled, rubbing her neck sheepishly.

“Or burns too quickly! Heehee! But yeah, just give her time.” Lissa encouraged. “Plenty of time at that matter, it took her ages to just stop harassing me,” Chrom’s voice rang and everyone turned to find the young price entering.

“Ah! Captain you’ve returned!” Sumia began, a flash of red crossing her face. “I was—I mean, we were so—” She stepped forward and not a moment sooner, she had tripped on thin air, smacking onto the floor. Chrom and the others hissed at the hard slam against the ground but Soren was the first one to rush over, assisting the young woman to her feet asking if she was all right. She quickly got up, brushing along her legs, her blush brighter than before.

“Sumia! Are you all right? Those boots of yours again?” Chrom asked, as if this was really a common thing with Sumia. Sumia sighed, scratching her cheek. “No—I mean yes! I mean….” She sighed again with Chrom rubbing the back of his head. Regaining his composure, he turned to the rest of the group.

“All right, listen, everyone; in the morning we’ll be marching to Regna Ferox.”

“Regna Ferox?” Soren repeated.

“A unified kingdom to Ylisse’s north. Inhabited by barbarians, or so it’s said.” Sumia explained to him. Chrom nodded in agreement, resting a hand to his waist.

“Warriors are what they are, and we’ll need their strength to quell this new menace. Typically, the Exalt would request such aid in person. But given recent events...” Chrom trailed off slightly as

“The creatures?” Soren asked. Chrom nodded. “The people might worry should my sister suddenly leave the capital. So the task has been passed to us.”

Chrom looked at the group again, “Now, this mission is strictly voluntary. So if, for any—“

“I volunteer!” Lissa snapped her hand up, waving it lightly. “Me too! You’ll be needin’ ol’ Teach along for such a delicate mission!” Vaike boosted. Chrom rolled his eyes slightly as did Lissa.

“I’ll go as well.” A man suddenly said. Soren and Lissa jumped, both turning to find a large man in a suit of armor had joined them. “AHH! Kellam! You scared the heck out of me! Don’t pop up like that!” Lissa scowled.

“….what? I’ve been here the whole time!” Kellam attempted to defend himself. Yet in a few seconds he was gone again, much to Soren’s disbelief. He swore he could hear a sigh of defeat ring from where Kellam once stood.

“I…I, um…” Sumia stuttered.

“Yes, Sumia?” Chrom requested. She flushed, looking down to her hands and sighed softly. “It’s just that I’m not sure I’m quite ready for a proper mission just yet. I’d probably just get in the way.” Chrom smiled understandingly, nodding slowly. “Well, you could stay behind the main group and if a battle is met, just watch and learn? Your choice, of course.” Chrom offered, “But some lessons can only be learned on the battlefield.”

“W-well, if you think it wise, Captain.” Sumia said.

“Just stay by me and you’ll be fine.” Chrom smiled as Sumia returned the smile.

“Oh, yes! I mean—Yes, sir, I’ll do that!” Sumia flushed, smiling. Chrom nodded while he dismissed the team, nearly getting interrupted with Sully came in, stomping her way towards Soren’s direction as Vaike slowly came up next to him, whistling at the sight.

“Oh boy, she looks on fire.” Vaike commented, nudging his ribcage. Vaike was quick back away from the unexpecting Soren.

“Soren, tell ruffles he needs to lay off or else I’m going to break his nose,” Sully threatened Soren, picking him up by his collar. Soren gritted his teeth, grabbing onto her wrists for support. “How is this my fault?!”

“Sully, I’ll handle Virion, Soren is still taking into all the new surroundings. I’m pretty sure he hasn’t even really talked with him either…” Sumia explained to the abrasive woman, catching her attention. Sully hummed judgingly, looking back directly to Soren. “Hmm, all right, sorry about that.” Sully let him down onto his feet. Sumia sighed in relief, nodding to Sully before stepping out, followed by Lissa who insisted on joining the older woman. “Soren, right?”

“Ah, yes,” Soren rubbed his neck, “Thank you Sully, I’m sorry Virion has been harassing you this whole time.”

“It’s not harassing, he’s just annoying. He’s getting in the way of my training.” Sully explained, waving a hand. “its fine, Sumia has it handled. She has a way with people.” Sully sighed, running a hand through her red locks.

“Still, now that I’m the tactician of the group, it’s my responsibility to see how well everyone works together—”

“So start that tomorrow,” Vaike slapped a hand to his back, earning another grunt from him. “You get to show us all your tricks tomorrow during the real deal. That’s the best time for it!”

“Vaike has a point,” Sully agreed, “Relax Soren, come on, it’s meal time anyways, and Stahl is cooking with Maribelle.”

“Eck…” Vaike turned his head to the side, already his tanned complexion looking a bit pale in comparison. “She’s cooking again? Ugh, maybe the Vaike won’t have to add the whole container of salt if Stahl is cooking too.”

“Hey, it’s better than my cooking so tough it up.” Sully chided to which Vaike’s shoulders dropped. “I’m still recovering over the last food poisoning…” Soren raised a brow as Vaike’s face seemed to turn a shade lighter at that very moment. He didn’t look well at all. Sully rolled her eyes, gesturing for the males to follow after her.

“Come on, let’s go eat, we march tomorrow.”

# Shepherd's Journal

Chapter Summary

> Another chapter is up, acting sort of as a filler but it does give a chance for lovely Soren to get to know everyone. Fun chapter to do and right on time too. I hope you all enjoy this, leave comments on how to improve if you have any if not, thank you for reading and have a wonderful day!

*Every story I create, creates me. I intend to create myself*

Octavia E. Butler

"Is everyone ready?" Chrom's voice called out, "We've a long march ahead."

The sun was finally ago after a long, almost sleepless night. No nightmares had occurred for Soren this time, it was Vaike's gruesome snoring. Past the snoring, it was also the anticipation for the next day. This is his first time acting as the tactician for the Shepherds. He was buried in his book after dinner, formulating plans and ideas of how to handle the potential bandits or monsters that were lurking around. The Shepherds so far consisting of Lissa, Vaike, Sully, Virion, Frederick, Chrom and Soren. Sumia was stationed not far behind, guarding along the carriage that carried the supplies to set up for camp.

They had marched an hour before dawn had cracked, making good timing as it would take a few more hours to reach Regna Ferox. The group had decided to take a half an hour break in order to figure out what position they were on the map. At this point, Soren was beginning to feel the tug for sleep nipping at the corner of his eyes but he knew better, focusing on his book instead. It wasn't going to take so long after they cross the bridge to the next village that bordered along the Regna Ferox territory.

The information in the book was beginning to slowly impend in his mind. The notes in the book specifically helped with his memorization though he wondered curiously if they were written by himself or someone else. It was written in a fairly legible calligraphy in a unique ink he had noticed was different than the ones they used in Ylisse, it was strange, he wasn't able to exactly figure out where it might have came from. Perhaps when they returned from Regna Ferox he would ask Chrom or Lissa to search amongst the library where such a style would exist.

"W-Wait for me!"

Nearly everyone turned finding another stallion galloping through the fields, coming to a speedy stop. His rider leapt off, adorned in a full, body armor such as Sully wore but in a green hue. Soren blinked slowly, almost surprised to recognize it was Stahl, the young gentleman who was cooking dinner last night. Soren had managed to be introduced rather briefly to him by Sully but was whisked away for a night of getting to know some of his comrades.

"Stahl?" Chrom acknowledged, arching his brows in confusion, "You're a little late to the march."

"Sorry Captain," Stahl rubbed his face, groaning lightly, "Why am I the last one to hear about the expedition to Ferox?"

“Huh? Vaike was supposed to…” Lissa eyes narrowed hastily, now direction her attention to the brute beside her, picking his teeth slightly before he noticed her gaze. “Vaike! Did you forget to tell Stahl about our mission?”

“The Vaike never forgets!” Vaike responded, rubbing the back of his neck, “I just don’t always remember, is all….”

“Ugh…” Lissa slapped her forehead, groaning tiredly at his antics, “I swear, you’d forget your own name if you weren’t constantly saying it yourself!! Speaking of which, are you SURE you remembered your axe this time?” Lissa demanded. Vaike scoffed, slapping his back to indicate the heavy weapon was lingering there. He clearly was not amused as he turned to fully face Lissa.

“Hey! That was one time—okay, twice, but training sessions don’t count.” Vaike defended only to cause Lissa to roll her eyes once more. “Anyways, I got it right here. Teach is loaded and ready for action!”

Vaike now turned to Stahl, smiling, “Glad to have you along, Stahl, ol’ buddy.”

“That makes one of us. I was in such a hurry, I had to miss breakfast! There were muffins, and cakes, and…” Stahl shoulders slumped as he sighed. “Well, I can tell you all about it while we march…”

Chrom nodded in agreement as he called out for everyone to get ready to march in the next five minutes. Things were collected and everyone was soon back to walking through the open fields of the northern Ylisse continent. Many hills and trees lined along the paved path towards Regna Ferox, clearly the weather still favoring the particular warmth Ylisse is known for. Soren decided to briefly to take a break from his readings, allowing the information to sit and formulate a plan. He blinked slowly, yawning lightly only to suddenly feel a slap to his back.

“Wake up, Soren! Didn’t get enough sleep?” Chrom asked curiously. Soren groaned momentarily, rubbing his shoulder and turned his head to Chrom as they continued to walk. “I tried to bare through all of Vaike’s snoring.”

“Oh, your tent was next to his?” Chrom asked with Soren nodded briefly.

“Hey, at least it was one night, I’ve had to sleep right next to his tent for months. Only reason I wasn’t yesterday was because I was on patrol.”

“Hmm?” Soren and Chrom both turned to find a muzzle nearly lingering over both of their shoulders. Looking to find the horse so close, they focused more on the rider, finding it was none other than Stahl.

“Your name is Stahl, correct?” Soren questioned, causing the man to turn his attention over to him, smiling at the recognition. “Hello again, Soren, Miriel told me we had a new Shepherd and I knew yesterday wasn’t the best introduction—er, Miriel’s another of our mages. She should catch up soon.”

“What happened? Did you not offer her a ride on your horse?” Chrom questioned. Stahl shook his head in disagreement, tugging his horse’s reins slightly to slow his pace down. “No, I did. We almost made it here, but Miriel insisted to get off. I think she couldn’t handle being on a horse for nearly two hours non-stop.”

“With your riding skills, I think for her sake she chose the better route,” Sully barked with laughter causing Stahl to pout at her tease. “It’s not so bad! I was just in a hurry, especially on an empty stomach…” His stomach growled conveniently causing the man to slump onto his horse, groaning

gently.

“Your stomach speaks for you, doesn’t it?” Sully quirked with Stahl rolling his eyes. “It would be for you too, you kind of have to live off food.”

“Bah! What you need is to hone your body to the ultimate weapon. Training nonstop is the best cure,” Sully boosted. Stahl merely continued brushing along his horse’s mane when Soren turned to Sully with a raised brow. “So Sully, are you one of the only females knights? Crossing through the training fields I didn’t see many…”

“Nope, there’s probably only a handful of us compared to the rest. I’m one of three to make it to the ranks like I have, the others are still rookies,” Sully exasperated, “Unlike the Pegasus Knights, the royal army wasn’t all that keen to allowing women to fight as knights. I’m trying to change that though,”

“You are?” Soren raised a brow to which Sully pounded a fist against her chest armor. “Hell yeah I am! I want to inspire other women that they can fight out here on the battle field just as well as any other man, even better than them!” Sully explained proudly to which Soren smiled in response. She certainly was leading a noble cause for young women alike. It seemed she was already doing a great job at it, considering she was whipping the men into place during training. He himself was almost hesitate to spar against Sully though it would lead to excellent training on his part.

Soren hummed softly, running a hand through his locks and resumed his attention once more on Chrom. It was still hard for Soren to be able to wrap his head around the fact that Chrom was in fact the prince of Ylisse halidom. That he was the younger brother of the Exalt Emmeryn and the elder brother of Lissa, another princess of the kingdom. He should’ve guessed that the brand on his right shoulder was actually a sign of royalty as Frederick had explained to him the last evening. It was known as the Brand of the Exalt, a universal known symbol for those descendants from the first Exalt who had slain the Fell Dragon. It should have been known as a symbol of peace, yet, these Plegians think otherwise.

“So what do you want, Soren?” Sully’s voice snapped him out of his own thoughts and looked over to his side, finding both Stahl and Sully were staring at him strangely. He flushed slightly, rubbing the back of his neck. “Honestly, I want to be able to do my best as the Shepherds tactician,” Soren answered to which Sully pouted in response, “What?”

“You’re not curious on finding out who you are?” Stahl asked politely to which Soren nodded slowly, “I would want to figure out who I am or who I used to be if that happened to me.”

“No, it’s true I am curious to figure it out,” Soren admitted, “I’m unsure where to start though…all I know is Lissa nearly tripped over me. Chrom and Frederick hadn’t seen anyone walking around that area so I’m left with questions to how I was left there, do I have any family members that are alive still or was I running away from something?” Soren sighed gently, pushing his bangs away from his face. ‘I don’t know honestly. I would like to know…but it’s not ideal at the moment.”

“Yeah, I get what you mean,” Stahl nodded, brushing along the horse’s man while Sully quirked her lips, turning around slightly. “Hey ruffles! Didn’t you say you had some spare books you wanted to get rid of?”

“Milady, please,” Virion sighed disappointingly, slowly trailing behind Soren and most of the group. He was honestly going at the same rate as Sumia was on the carriage. He certainly did not seem to enjoy all the walking really, especially carrying his equipment on his body. “I’ve told you my names numerous of times, would it be too much to ask to hear you speak my names upon your beautiful lips??”

Sully's eye twitched as Stahl beside sighed with a faint, "Oh boy," echoing from his direction.

"I'm going to assume that's a no then," Sully huffed as Virion was suddenly by Soren's, producing a book readily in his hand. "On the contrary, I do have it here. Soren, it seems fate has it that you are in need of this?"

"Wait, me?" Soren repeated, taking the book from Virion's grasp and tilted his head slightly. It was a plain cover with nothing written on it, or in it for that matter as Soren began to flip through the pages. It was completely empty.

"Use it as a journal or something, maybe it'll spark some memories in your brain." Sully teased with Virion nodding in agreement. "It would be most imperative to keep a log of your tactics too. Consider it a gift from yours truly," Virion added causing Soren to look over, questioning if he truly acted this condescending every time he spoke. Even if he had something genuine in mind to offer. Soren scratched the back of his neck, smiling gently at the idea. It wasn't such a bad idea to consider writing down all his daily activities, strategies and results from battles. He smiled gently, tucking the book within the inside of his cloak, nodding his head towards Virion and Sully's direction.

"Thank you, I appreciate it, truly."

"No need to thank us, it was after all, my dearly beloved Sully's idea." Virion gestured as Sully grimaced once more, now snapping her reins to catch up further more with Frederick. The same knight who made it fairly clear to Virion not to approach Lissa anytime soon. Virion sighed, waving a hand over his head. "Oh there she goes again, but less I fret, our paths will cross again soon enough." Virion serenaded the upcoming future.

Soren sighed lightly, already finding it rather…amusing dealing with all these different personalities clashing with one another. Soren smirked briefly, watching as Virion slowed once more now to engage in a conversation with Sumia, the young woman smiling pleasantly. This army, though small as it might be, it truly was beginning to form into a tight knit group. Soren smiled when he hurried forward, reaching over to catch back with Chrom.

"Chrom, if you have a moment—" Soren began when he suddenly stopped, clenching his teeth, "Oh gods."

"What?" Chrom had turned to the direction Soren had looked to. The monsters seemed to be on the rise, blocking the access to the other side of the bridge. The entire army took to a formation, already armed and ready for the encounter.

"Gods, have the Risen spread this far?" Chrom demanded with Soren raising a brow at the term, "Risen?" Soren repeated.

"We needed a name for this new threat, so the council gave them one." Frederick answered quickly,

"Everyone, remember what we're up against!"

"Mya ha! They'll remember ME once I drive my axe into their…." Vaike was reaching for thin air behind his back and Soren could only stare in disbelief. Lissa wasn't joking about things disappearing rather quickly from his possession. How could he not tell the weight of the axe had disappeared from his back? "Wait…my axe. Where's my axe?! I had it a second ago!" Vaike exclaimed panicky with Chrom and Frederick sending him sharp glares from behind. Soren was already making mental notes to keep Vaike as more of a support unit….or out of battles if he didn't show up with that axe of his.

“Vaike, this is no times for jokes…” Chrom reprimanded with Vaike searching the surrounding area. “I’m serious! It’s gone, but I JUST had it! It’s got to be around here somewhere….”

“Keep to the rear, then!” Chrom snapped, his attention focused back on the Risens, finding one of the monsters had turned its attention to them. They’ve been noticed now. “The battle is nigh!”

“All right, listen up. Especially those of you who BROUGHT weapons!” Frederick sent a sharp glance to the other side, watching as Vaike quickly rounded up in the back behind Chrom, Soren, and Virion. “All weapons have strengths and weaknesses to bear in mind. Lances have an advantage over swords for example, while swords best axes. We’ll want to work this into our strategy whenever possible.”

Soren nodded briefly, already making the mental calculations on who were closest in proximities to each other. With Sully and Stahl leading front on horseback, it was easy to set them up in a close range of each other. They could easily handle off the swordsman and axeman with the three leading up from behind for support. Frederick as same as before will provide safety for Lissa… and Vaike for the moment at hand. Four Risens along with five across the bridge. Mission number one was at hand and he was going to make this as smooth as possible.

“Stahl, Sully, you lead ahead with Chrom following along with myself. Virion and Frederick, provide as back up and Lissa, keep close with Frederick—”

“What about me?!” Vaike interrupted causing the tactician to turn, sighing softly. “Do as Frederick commanded, unless by a miracle your weapon was to come right now.”

“I’d not though such dereliction permissible among the Shepherds, though to find what manner of ignoramus would mislay their weapon. Now I know.” Vaike and Soren turned to find a slender woman dressed in dark robe head in their direction. She wore a pointed hat which shadowed her scarlet hair. She pushed her glasses up gently and looked sternly towards Vaike, stalking towards his direction. In one arm, she clutched a tome, the front cover detailing the runes of fire. In the other hand however she was dragging an axe, one that Vaike jumped at the sight of.

“Whoa! My axe!” He hastily took it from her position, easily swinging it over his shoulder. “Thank Miriel! Er, for the axe, anyway.” Vaike thanked while the woman watched him sternly, her eyes narrowing. “Perhaps next time I’ll use a spell to fasten it to your hands…permanently.”

With that in mind, Vaike laughed nervously and Miriel turned, now focusing her attention upon Soren.

“And I’m to judge you’re the new tactician of this cavalry?” Miriel demanded. Soren merely nodded as she hummed thoughtfully, her eyes scanning up and down. “Then I’d trust you would do a sufficient task at overcoming this skirmish.” She paced forward with Vaike following not too far behind, Soren giving quick instructions to follow behind Frederick and Virion, leading ahead of the group.

It was quick for an engagement of combat when Sully was the first to slash across one of the Risen. Virion hurriedly followed behind with a fire of his arrow, piercing through the creature’s skull. Even when he didn’t go down, Soren had casted a thunder spell of his own to finish the creature off. Following with that, Miriel certainly was a tactful mage, covering for Frederick as had pierced through another swordsman that nearly took to Chrom’s path. The young prince nodded in appreciation before charging forward, clashing blades against a Risen, deflecting his axe and hurriedly slashed it across the stomach.

Soren kept his eyes out, calling out on those who needed assistance and jumping into the fray when the time called for it. Three Risens were left on their sides as Soren narrowed his eyes,

charging against the archer that was aiming directly for Miriel. He intersected the arrow with a quick spell of thunder, catching the Risen's attention. Miriel seemed to catch notice, turning her attention away from Vaike as he finished off another Risen.

"Fire!" She casted the flames towards the archer's direction, now distracting it from two different angles.

"What next, Soren?!" Chrom called out as Soren dodged another arrow, hastily snapping his attention over before swinging his sword out. "Chrom, I'm a bit busy!" Soren called back, slamming his sword into the chest of the Risen. As much as he expected blood to spill out, ash and dust disintegrated around the blade, falling to the ground. He panted lightly, groaning slightly as the group was now stationed at the bridge, Stahl leading an assault against a rogue Risen that had decided to foolishly attack the knight.

"Might I advise patience, milord?" Frederick suddenly stepped in, looking to Chrom. "Soren is still new, regardless if he does have the potential of being a brilliant tactician. Even the best of us need rest. Or in Soren's case, time."

"Yes of course, sorry," Chrom apologized hastily. Soren huffed out a relieved thank you to Frederick as he joined the others with Miriel at his side. Across from the bridge only remained three more monsters, the Risen Chief wielding a heavy axe, looking incredibly hostile compared to the other Risens, this one was going to require more of a distance fight.

"Miriel, if you'll assist Virion, we're going after the leader of this group while Frederick and Vaike take the brute on the left while Chrom and Lissa head over to the last one," The six nodded in agreement, spreading out to divide and conquer the field. Splitting up, it was clear during this battle to see how combing units was not only a better chance that the enemy would be defeated, but it was increasing moral, creating a bond between comrades, yes, he knew he was going to have to use this sort of strategy more often in the future. Something to certainly write in that book of his now.

The Risen Chief had now set its sight on Soren, it was cue for Miriel to step to the side, quickly shooting out a ball of flame to the risen. The risen blocked with it's axe but Virion jumped beside, firing in rapid succession two arrows that had pierced through it's leg and upper shoulder. Taking the advantage as Miriel casted another fire spell, Soren came from behind the Risen, slashing it across the back, He ducked quickly as the axe was swung towards his direction, lunging the sword forward to pierce through the chest. Dust settled upon the ground allowing Soren to relax, sighing gently in relief.

Looking across the battle field, he witnessed the defeat of the other two Risens. Soon enough everyone relaxed and or cheered about the victor, causing him to smile. He did it, he kept everyone alive. That was honestly a relief on his part.

"Phew! That was a doozy!" Lissa stretched her arms above her head, humming loudly as Sully wiped her forehead. Stahl sighed in relief, brushing along his horse's mane and complimented it on a job well done. Miriel fixed her hat, humming in approval and Vaike hollered, grinning like a madman. Chrom called out if anyone had been seriously injured but luckily for them, most of the group just came out with a few scratches that Lissa was able to heal up in a jiff. The group had rejoined back with Sumia, now finally able to cross the bridge with no more troubles. Continuing on with this walk, Chrom congratulated Soren on the job well done, causing the male to smile. Yet, from the far distance, something caught Soren's eye.

"Well, what do we have here?" Soren halted momentarily while the carriage slowly passed by, Sumia abruptly stopping when she found Chrom and Frederick had stopped as well.

“Is that what I think it is?” Lissa leapt off the carriage, giggling excitedly as Soren and Chrom began to walk towards the strange creature that was laying on the field.

“It’s a Pegasus, all right. I think it’s hurt. Let’s just have a look here…” Chrom inched towards the armed pegasus, noticing how there was a cut along the hind leg of the beautiful stallion. Yet in an instant the winged beast became alarmed, getting on it’s high legs and nyahing loudly. Chrom stumbled back with the pegasus now standing abruptly, kicking at the ground and spreading it’s wings to blow some of the dust at them.

“WHOA! Down, girl! Easy there!” Chrom attempted to relax the stallion but clearly Chrom was not one to deal with animals.

“Captain! One moment,” Soren turned to find Sumia and Sully joining them, Sumia joining Chrom’s side, not before stumbling onto her face epically. Soren winched watching as now Chrom was the first to assist her up, “Sumia! Are you all right?”

“No! I mean, yes, I mean….” Sumia sighed gently, curling her fingers to fists against her chest, “I really need to get new boots…” Chrom sighed gently before shaking his head.

“Well, come no closer. This beast is crazed!” Chrom informed her. Sumia on the other hand, looked hurt momentarily before she smiled warmly. “It’s okay, Captain. I can handle this…” Sumia walked forward, muttering soft ‘sshh’ as she slowly held her hand towards the stallion. The pegasus squirmed slightly in place but did not object as Sumia took advantage to slowly begin brushing along the nose, cooing the beast to settle down.

“Easy now girl, I won’t hurt you.” Sumia promised, brushing along the pegasus’s mane. Soren watched carefully as Sumia was able to soothe down the pegasus, continuing to brush and stroke along the mane. The pegasus nuzzled finally against her palm, Sumia smiling brightly at the gesture, nuzzling her head briefly beside the winged beast. Chrom seemed just as amazed, blinking slowly at the spectacle at hand.

“How did she calm it so quickly?” Soren asked briefly to which Chrom merely shrugged, mesmerized at the scene at hand. “She has a thing for animals,” Sully answered, nudging against Soren’s side as Lissa smiled brightly.

“That’s incredible, Sumia!” Lissa credited as Chrom nodded in agreement, smiling. “I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“Oh, it’s…it’s nothing. Really. I just have a way with animals, I guess.” Sumia answered bashfully, blushing at the comments as they continued to roll in, especially from Virion who was calling her the goddess of nature at this point. Miriel was quick to write all these notes down, muttering how this could lead to valuable research later on in her career.

“I should say so!” Chrom smiled as Sumia blushed, smiling back. “You all go on ahead. I’ll dress her wounds and catch up as soon as we’re able.”

“We can make time to wait for you.” Chrom offered causing Soren to look momentarily over to the man, raising a brow. Lissa seemed to join in on the staring, humming suggestively to which Soren turned his head slightly, finding her smiling deviously. I hope she wasn’t thinking what he was thinking. That would become rather problematic. Sumia smiled sweetly, shaking her head to decline the offer.

“Thank you, Captain. But I can manage. I’m sure to see you all again briefly. Every moment is precious when all of Ylisse is in danger.” Chrom’s lips seemed to quirk back and Soren raised a brow. Did he know something about Sumia the others didn’t? Yet in the end Chrom smiled at

Sumia's request, nodding his head. "Right, then. Be safe, Sumia."

"Oh yeah, don't worry about Sumia. She can handle herself, she's a tough cookie." Though Sully came lugging a small bag and a long lance, holding it up to Sumia as she smiled. "You're going to need these."

"Heh, thanks Sully," Sumia easily took the equipment from her, settling them down before the pegasus and nodded towards everyone's direction. It seemed with a weary sense of trust that the group did continue to march as Sumia continued to tend the pegasus. Not even twenty minutes walking away from her did the environment begin to change. It was not far of a walk as the weather began to take a turn for the worse. It was clear no one was anticipating when snow began to drift down from the sky above, a chill breeze immediately greeting them.

"Brr…it's freezing." Lissa shivered, rubbing her arms hastily as the territory only grew colder and colder. Soren nodded in agreement, accompanying the carriage while Virion had offered a blanket to Lissa, maneuvering into the back of the carriage to supply her with one. Honestly Soren was half tempted to ask Virion to see if there was any others but knew he could tough it out. This was the first time Soren had ever seen snow, it was beautiful for sure, but in this tundra he could feel his feet beginning to freeze to the ground.

Even from here, there seemed to be some progression finally as a fortress was well in sights. Chrom held a hand up, halting the group from pursing any farther. "All right, we're leaving the carriage here for now."

"W-wait what?!" Lissa demanded, trembling underneath the blanket. "This is the Longfort, it stretches along the border of Ylisse and Regna Ferox. The khans that rule Ferox have grown quite wary of foreigners." Frederick explained on Chrom's behalf, sighing gently. "Still, don't mistake a lack of hospitality for open hostility. This simply calls for a bit of diplomacy."

"But why can't we bring the carriage??"

"I rather be cautious then to bring a whole carriage full of weapons and supplies to their doorstep. Negotiation's not my strong suit, but I'll do my best with handling this situation." Chrom explained. Lissa pouted, shivering as she tossed the blanket back, leaping off the cart as they carefully removed Frederick's horse from the carriage. They managed to camouflage the carriage fairly well, especially with this blizzard, hopefully they didn't end up losing it.

"Remember, everyone: your actions here reflect back upon Ylisse." Chrom warned as everyone nodded. Yet Frederick hadn't taken his warhorse's reins, his eyes fixated upon the fortress's wall. Soren decided to stand beside, narrowing his eyes when he noticed slight movement. It seems guards were positioned along guard towers and they were….rallying their men?

"There seems to be troubles in the wind, milord: The Feroxi Guard are mobilizing." Frederick warned. Chrom snapped his attention back while Lissa gripped onto her staff. The others were already equipped with all of their weapons safe to say.

"What?! Why?"

"Who can say? But they look ready to let fly at a moment's notice." Frederick answered wearily, "We'd best prepare for combat, just to be safe. Loathe as I am to trust him, Soren might offer some valuable insight in this…"

"Indeed, he is our tactician, after all. So, Soren, what do you suggest?" All had turned to Soren now, his lips quirking at the task at hand. First day as tactician of an army, he wasn't going to fail.

End Notes

So, this is my first Fire Emblem fan-fiction that I hope to continue to spurge on. I recently got into the series a year ago and I completely fell in love with the characters, story, and music. I really love this game to death, it totally came by surprise as well so it's a bonus! So I would really appreciate any comments and critiquing for what I can do to improve this story along the way. I really suck at romance as well -w- so if you have tips or else Lucina will end up how she is in the game to be so awkward. BUT ANYWAYS. I hope you enjoy this story. This fic should hopefully be posted every week or every two weeks depending on how busy my schedule becomes. Thank you for reading and until next time, enjoy~

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!